

# Window Interiors

When buildings are constructed today, there is heavy emphasis on energy efficiency, both to lower costs and be as green as possible. Beyond architectural design and glass treatments, one of the most important tools to strengthen or improve a structure's energy efficiency is the use of shade systems. At the same time, window shade systems can add important interior design elements that make a space more visually appealing. We may not realize it, but window shade systems are an important part of creating beautiful interiors and energy efficient buildings.

The entrepreneur in Sandi Saft, founder and President of Windows Interiors, saw the opportunity in window shade systems. And she found the Florida SBDC at UCF to help her realize her vision. Fast forward to today and Sandi and her team have built an impressive company and been named Small Business Person of the Year for North Florida, in recognition of her business accomplishments, strength under adversity and contributions to the community.

It was more than 25 years ago that Sandi started her company and she began by taking advantage of the FSBDC's new business seminars to build and expand her business knowledge and perspective. With that support, she founded Windows Interiors and, with her team at the company behind her, has built a highly successful company.

Window Interiors is a sub-contractor that provides attractive and energy efficient window covering systems. The company works with general contractors, health care systems, national restaurant groups and building management companies. The company has contributed to the beauty and efficiency of a broad range of buildings, including Florida Hospital's Ginsberg Wing, the Amway Center and, very recently, the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, among others.

Sandi is the first to say she hasn't done it alone. She credits the Window Interiors team for much of what has been accomplished. She is also vocal in her appreciation of Pauline Davis, her consultant at the FSBDC at UCF, who has assisted with focused, one-on-one consulting. "The FSBDC has been very, very helpful. I have been able to rely on its resources and Pauline's counsel, whether it be about budgeting, human resources or managing growth," Sandi says. "You don't need to be a start-up to benefit from their help. The FSBDC has an accumulation of knowledge and experience that every business can call on and benefit from, all at little or no cost."

And the business results at Window Interiors supports Sandi's enthusiasm. The company stayed the course through the Great Recession, retaining its employees in the face of the downturn. Today the company is in hiring mode with the largest sales pipeline in the company's history and a long list of bid requests awaiting a response.

"The award of Small Business Person of the Year is a real honor for me, and for the whole team here at Window Interiors," Sandi commented. "I would say to any entrepreneur or business owner out there: Go for it! The FSBDC will make sure you are going in the right direction and will provide the help you need."

## Providing the tools, strategies, and expertise to help Florida's business community thrive.

*State Designated as Florida's Principal Provider of Business Assistance [288.001, Fla. Stat.]*

The Florida SBDC at UCF is a member of the Florida SBDC Network, a statewide service network funded in part through cooperative agreements with the U.S. SBA, Defense Logistics Agency, State of Florida, and other private and public partners; hosted by the University of West Florida; and nationally accredited by the Association of SBDCs.

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### MEET SANDI SAFT

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